

## U.C. Santa Cruz Chancellor Blumenthal Joins Stem Cell Agency Board

Posted: February 8, 2017

**February 8, 2017 Oakland, CA** The Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth, sparked an interest in space and resulted in a career that has led George Blumenthal, Ph.D., to a seat on the governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

Dr. Blumenthal is now the Chancellor at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), a renowned professor of astronomy and astrophysics, author, researcher and champion of diversity. He was appointed to the CIRM Board by California Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom, who described him as: "a world-class scientist and forward-looking administrator. As a Regent of the University of California, I have been impressed by his deep commitment to expanding educational opportunity for all California students and enhancing research opportunities. I am confident the Chancellor's vision and leadership will be of immense benefit to the CIRM Board."

Dr. Blumenthal said he is looking forward to being part of CIRM's mission: "The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine is doing outstanding work, and I am delighted to join the Board. CIRM support has advanced stem cell research at UC Santa Cruz and across the state. Public support for this work remains strong, and I look forward to playing a role in securing the future of the institute."

Blumenthal joined the faculty of UC Santa Cruz in 1972 and was named chancellor in 2007. The first in his family to graduate from college, Blumenthal is an advocate for educational opportunity and a vocal proponent of public higher education. "Public colleges and universities produce more than 70 percent of college graduates in this country," he noted.

Dr. Blumenthal has been a champion of diversity both at UCSC, where he created the Chancellor's Advisory Council on Diversity, and throughout the U.C. system, where he served as a member of the Regents' Study Group on Diversity.

Prior to becoming chancellor, he had a distinguished career as a researcher and campus leader. A professor of astronomy and astrophysics, his research has helped deepen our understanding of galaxies and the cosmos, including the role that dark matter plays in the formation of the structure of the universe. He is the chair of the California Association for Research in Astronomy (CARA), which manages the W. M. Keck Observatory near the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii. He is also a co-author of two of the leading astronomy textbooks, *21st Century Astronomy* and *Understanding our Universe*.

In an article in Valley Vision, the newsletter for Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Dr. Blumenthal said the 1957 launch of Sputnik helped fuel his interest in science in general and space in particular.

"Sputnik had a profound effect on American science and it certainly played a part in my interest in space and physics all through high school, college and graduate school," says Blumenthal. "I intended to become a particle physicist, but after a year in grad school I became more interested in space and astronomy, so I changed from studying the smallest things in the universe to the biggest, like galaxies."

Jonathan Thomas, Chair of the CIRM Board said: "We are honored to have someone with Dr. Blumenthal's experience and expertise join the Board. As Chancellor at UCSC he has demonstrated a clear commitment to advancing world-class research and earned a reputation as a bold and visionary leader. We look forward to seeing those qualities in action to help advance CIRM's mission."

Blumenthal is married to UC Hastings College of the Law professor Kelly Weisberg, who studies domestic violence and family law. Their son is a recent graduate of Berkeley Law; their daughter will graduate from the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA this spring.

A member of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Blumenthal enjoys theater, international travel, and working out at the gym.

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$3 billion in funding and approximately 300 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is the world's largest institution dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information, go to [www.cirm.ca.gov](http://www.cirm.ca.gov)

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